

Senate Resolution 617

By: Senators Johnson of the 1st, Douglas of the 17th, Staton of the 18th, Stephens of the 27th, Kemp of the 46th and others

A RESOLUTION

1 In memory of and honoring the life and service of Sergeant First Class Paul Ray Smith; and
2 for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, Sergeant First Class Paul Ray Smith is the first recipient of the Medal of Honor
4 for Operation Iraqi Freedom, and this award is the military's highest award for courageous
5 action; and

6 WHEREAS, the community at Fort Stewart and our nation lost one of its finest husbands,
7 fathers, citizens, and soldiers when Sergeant First Class Smith, a combat engineer of Bravo
8 Company, 11th Engineer Battalion, Task Force 2-7, Third Infantry Division gave his life on
9 April 4, 2003, defending the people of Iraq and his country while fighting in Operation Iraqi
10 Freedom; and

11 WHEREAS, Sergeant First Class Smith led a defense of a compound at the Battle of
12 Baghdad Airport against a much larger force of Special Republican Guard troops in an
13 intense 90 minute firefight, hurling a grenade over the compound's wall and blasting an
14 antitank missile at a guard tower, manning a .50-caliber machine gun, repeatedly firing and
15 reloading three times before he was mortally wounded, allowing wounded American soldiers
16 to be evacuated, protecting his Task Force's flank, killing 20 to 50 Iraqis, and saving an aid
17 station and as many as 100 lives; and

18 WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor, received by only 832 people since World War II, has not
19 been awarded to any soldier since 1993, and Sergeant First Class Smith's actions and
20 extreme heroism earned him his award after his nomination wended its way through more
21 than 12 levels of military and presidential reviews over the past two years; and

22 WHEREAS, the Medal of Honor signifies that a soldier acted valiantly in a moment of
23 extraordinary pressure and represents the best in soldiering skills; and

1 WHEREAS, this young war hero who grew up in Tampa, Florida, enlisted in the Army in
2 1989, served in the 1991 Persian Gulf war, and was affectionately known as a taskmaster;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, this exceptional and thoughtful soldier exhibited outstanding leadership,
5 patriotism, courage, and dedication in his service to this state and nation in the Army; and

6 WHEREAS, his unparalleled leadership talents, his remarkable patience and diplomacy, his
7 keen sense of vision, and his acute sensitivity to the needs of his soldiers earned him respect
8 and admiration; and

9 WHEREAS, Sergeant First Class Smith selflessly gave his life in the service and defense of
10 his country, and his heroism will never be forgotten; and

11 .

12 WHEREAS, it is appropriate to pay tribute to this fallen hero.

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that each and every member
14 of this body hereby honors the memory of Sergeant First Class Paul Ray Smith, expresses
15 their deep and abiding appreciation of his service and ultimate sacrifice, and conveys to his
16 family their sincere condolences and sympathy.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed
18 to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to the family of Sergeant First Class Paul
19 Ray Smith.